

Message Text

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PAGE 01 PARIS 14263 031714Z
ACTION EUR-12

INFO OCT-01 ISO-00 CIAE-00 DODE-00 PM-05 H-01 INR-10
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R 031702Z MAY 78
FM AMEMBASSY PARIS
TO SECSTATE WASHDC 0979
INFO AMEMBASSY BONN
AMEMBASSY BRUSSELS
AMEMBASSY LONDON
AMEMBASSY MADRID
AMEMBASSY ROME
AMCONSUL BORDEAUX
AMCONSUL LYON
AMCONSUL MARSEILLE
AMCONSUL NICE
AMCONSUL STRASBOURG

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USEEC

E.O. 11652: N/A
TAGS: ELAB, FR
SUBJECT: MAY DAY 1978: A CHANGED MOOD

1. SUMMARY: FOR THOSE WHO WITNESSED THE ENTHUSIASTIC
DEMONSTRATION OF 1977, THIS YEAR'S MAY DAY PARADE
REGISTERED THE CHANGED POST-ELECTION NATIONAL MOOD.
NO ONE, NOT EVEN THE CGT, PUT IN THEIR ALL; A NUMBER
OF FAMILIAR FACES WEREN'T THERE; AND THE PRESENCE OF
LARGE NUMBERS OF FOREIGNERS DEMONSTRATING ABOUT
ISSUES ALIEN TO FRANCE GAVE THE WHOLE AFFAIR A
CURIOUS FLAVOR. AS IF TO UNDERSCORE THESE DIF-
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PAGE 02 PARIS 14263 031714Z

FERENCES, SOME OF THE FRINGE GROUPS CLASHED WITH
THE POLICE LATE IN THE DAY, WHICH RESULTED IN SOME
SHARP BUT LOCALIZED VIOLENCE. END SUMMARY.

2. THIS YEAR'S TRADITIONAL MAY DAY PARADE LACKED
THE ENTHUSIASM AND ELAN WHICH MARKED LAST YEAR'S
MARCH (SEE PARIS 12857 OF MAY 2, 1977).

ALTHOUGH ORGANIZED BY THE PARIS REGIONAL HEADQUARTERS OF THE THREE LEADING LEFTIST TRADE UNIONS, THE CGT, CFDT, AND THE TEACHER'S FEDERATION (FEN), ONLY THE NATIONAL LEADERS OF THE CGT AND FEN TURNED OUT FOR THE PARADE. IN THE NEW POST-ELECTION MOOD, CFDT GENERAL SECRETARY MAIRE STAYED AWAY TO UNDERSCORE THE FACT THAT AUTOMATIC UNITY OF ACTION WITH THE CGT WAS A THING OF THE PAST, AND THAT THE CFDT'S RETURN TO PRIMARILY TRADE UNION, AS OPPOSED TO POLITICAL, INTERESTS INVOLVES A PLAYING DOWN OF PARADES AND MANIFESTATIONS. (MAIRE'S FAILURE TO APPEAR DREW SOME SNIDE REMARKS FROM CGT GENERAL SECRETARY SEGUY, BUT GIVEN MAIRE'S EARLIER STATEMENTS ON UNITY OF ACTION, IT WOULD HAVE BEEN A SURPRISE HAD HE SHOWED UP. HOWEVER, EVEN THE CGT'S PARTICIPATION WAS AT A MARKEDLY REDUCED LEVEL FROM LAST YEAR, AND SUCH OLD CROWD PLEASERS AS THE CGT POLICE AND SEWER WORKERS, AS WELL AS THE NORMALLY LARGE NUMBERS OF MUNICIPAL EMPLOYEES FROM THE COMMUNIST-CONTROLLED MUNICIPALITIES, WERE NOWHERE TO BE SEEN.

3. FOREIGN ELEMENTS, ON THE OTHER HAND, AND IN PARTICULAR VERY LARGE NUMBERS OF TUNISIAN AND MORACCAN WORKERS AND IRANIAN STUDENTS, ALL VIGOROUSLY PROTESTING AGAINST ALLEGED REPRESSION IN THEIR HOMELANDS, WERE VERY MUCH IN EVIDENCE; AS WERE SMALLER LIMITED OFFICIAL USE

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PAGE 03 PARIS 14263 031714Z

BUT EQUALLY LOUD GROUPS OF LATIN-AMERICAN STUDENTS AND TURKISH WORKERS. THERE WERE ALSO THE TRADITIONAL GROUPS FROM THE SPANISH AND PORTUGUESE COMMUNITIES, AN IRA GROUP (APPARENTLY THIS TIME LOCALS - THEY WERE SPORTING AN IRISH TRICOLOR CUT AND FLOWN SIDEWAYS) AND A BAND OF SEVEN OR SO INDIVIDUALS CLAIMING TO REPRESENT THE AMERICAN INDIAN MOVEMENT (AIM). THIS YEAR, THE FOREIGNERS, AND THEIR DEMANDS AND COMPLAINTS ABOUT CONDITIONS IN THEIR OWN COUNTRIES, GAVE AN EXOTIC, EVEN ALIEN, ATMOSPHERE TO MUCH OF THE PROCEEDINGS; AND THIS WAS NOTED AND COMMENTED ON BY ALMOST EVERYONE.

4. AS IN THE PAST, VARIOUS FRINGE GROUPS (LESBIANS, ANARCHISTS, ETC.) ALSO JOINED IN THE MARCH, AND SOME OF THE MORE EXTREME ELEMENTS AMONGST THE ANARCHISTS ARE SAID TO HAVE PROVOKED A CLASH WITH THE POLICE NEAR THE END OF THE DAY. STONES WERE THROWN, CARS BURNED, AND STORES LOOTED IN A SMALL AREA NEAR BASTILLE, IN A NASTY EPISODE WHICH SOME PEOPLE ARE BLAMING ON WILD MEN, AND OTHERS ARE CALLING A POLICE PROVOCATION. TO THAT EXTENT, AT

LEAST, THINGS ARE STILL THE SAME.
HARTMAN

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